



The President's Daily Brief

6 June 1970

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LATE ITEM

CAMBODIA

A Cambodian Government spokesman said this morning that Siem Reap city and its airport have come under Communist attack, according to press reports. The size of the attacking force and its composition have not yet been determined. The government is said to be trying urgently to get reinforcements to the area.

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PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

Events in Cambodia are discussed on *Page 1*.

In Laos, no major military activity was reported yesterday, but intercepts point to impending Communist actions in the south. (*Page 3*)

Recent Communist attacks in South Vietnam have been characterized mainly by shelling of military and urban targets.

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On *Page 6* we offer some thoughts on the forthcoming visit to New York of Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister Firyubin.

Incidents on the Israeli-Jordanian border have raised tempers in both Tel Aviv and Amman. (*Page 8*)

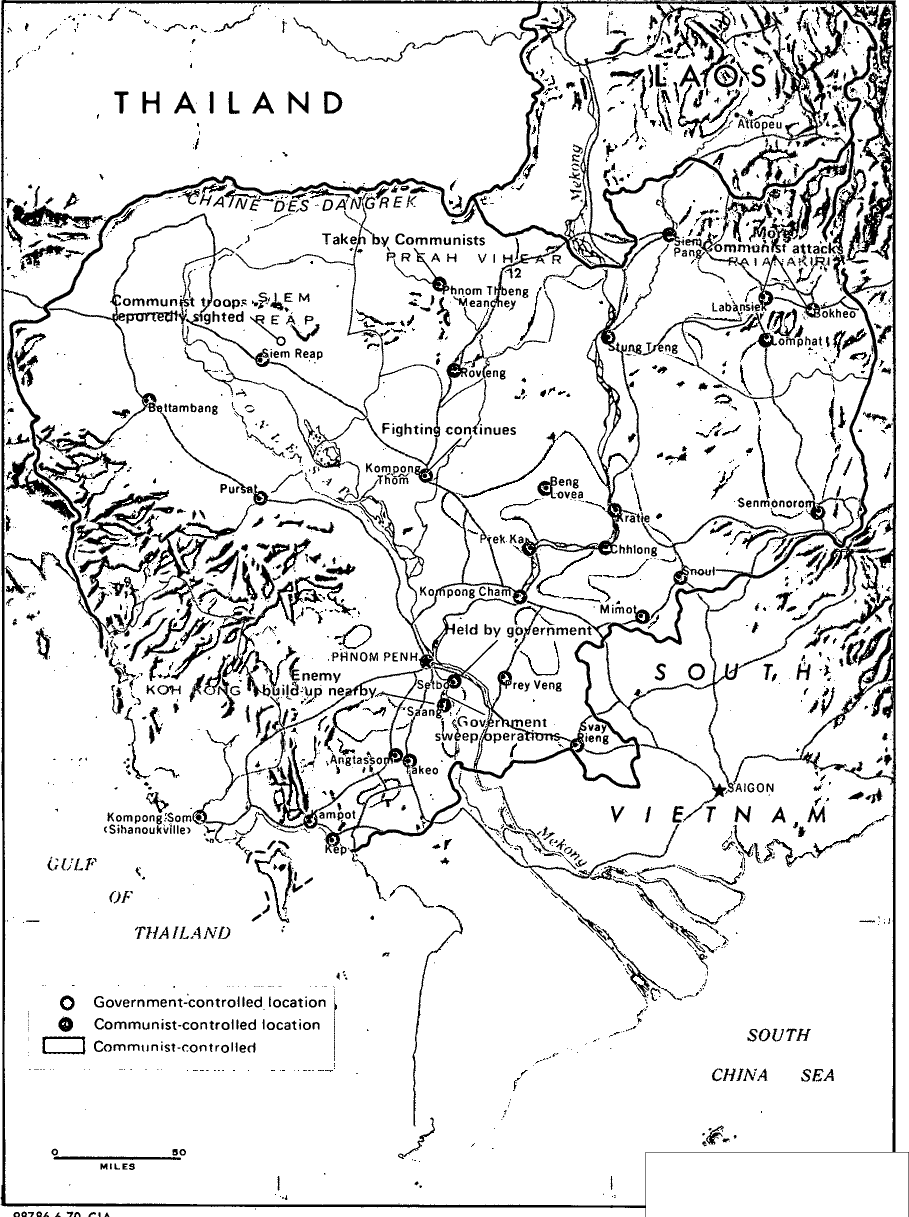
Panama expects major US concessions to follow from its extension of the Rio Hato Base Agreement. (*Page 9*)

Satellite photography has identified two new groups of SS-11 silos in the USSR. (*Page 10*)

Madame Binh's departure from Paris will leave no high-level representative in either of the Vietnamese Communist delegations there. (*Page 10*)

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Cambodia: Current Situation



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CAMBODIA

Two government battalions, backed by air and armor support, moved into the village of Setbo, south of Phnom Penh, yesterday, meeting only token enemy resistance. [redacted] elements of a Communist regiment are still in the area, however. A buildup of Communist forces was also reported near Saang, a river town some 18 miles south of Phnom Penh that was held briefly by the Communists in late April. Several government battalions have been ordered to sweep the Bassac River area between Setbo and Saang.

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Kompong Thom town is still besieged by Communist forces, but the four Cambodian battalions there appear to be holding their own. They are receiving some tactical support from the Cambodian Air Force, and supplies are being dropped to them. The regional commander has asked for at least two Khmer Krom or paratroop battalions to launch a counterattack.

In the northeast, the Communists placed mortar fire on Bokheo town in Ratanakiri Province, but without serious effect. The nearby position at Labansiek continues to be harassed.

Government officials in Preah Vihear Province are now reporting Communist troop movements west of Route 12; it appears that the provincial capital of Tbeng Meanchey has fallen. [redacted]

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According to Cambodian intercepts, Vietnamese Communist troops are moving through a district in eastern Siem Reap Province. This would represent the Communists' deepest westward penetration, but it is possible that the troops are indigenous Cambodian insurgents. The Communists are telling villagers that Siem Reap city will be attacked soon. Such reports probably dictated Phnom Penh's decision to suspend temporarily tourist travel to nearby Angkor Wat, for "security reasons."

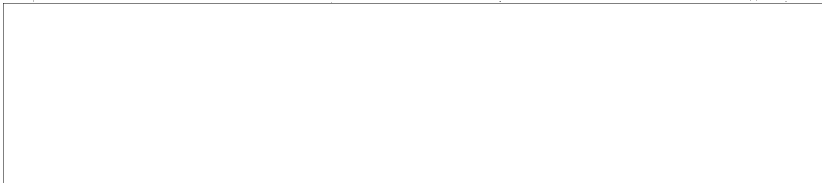
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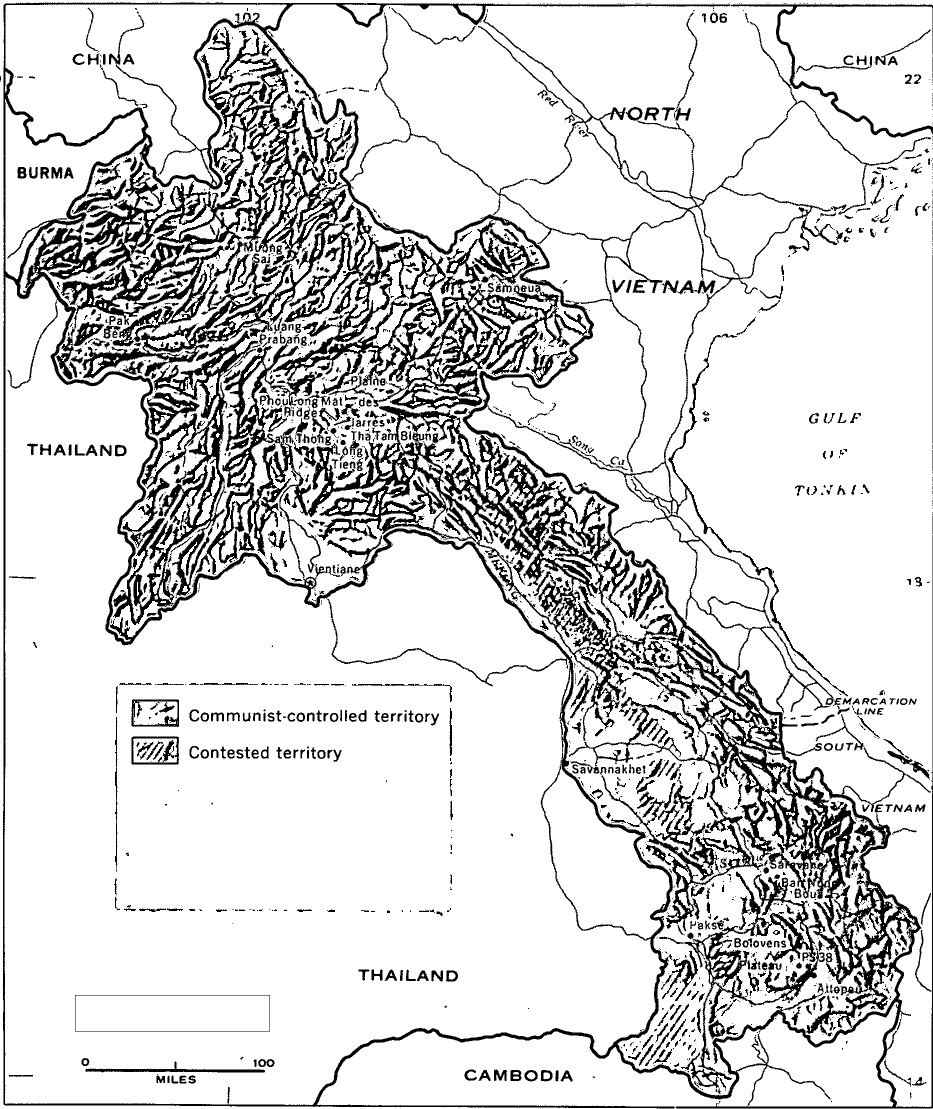
According to our embassy in Bangkok, there has been considerable debate in the Thai cabinet over the kind of military support to be given Cambodia. Prime Minister Thanom and his deputy, General Pra-phat, appeared to incline toward sending regular Thai troops. Under the urging of Foreign Minister Thanat, however, it was decided to send only ethnic Cambodian volunteers, who would serve as an integral part of the Cambodian Army.



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Laos: Current Situation



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LAOS

The fighting in the Sam Thong - Tha Tam Bleung sector has tapered off, and government forces are regrouping to go back on the offensive soon. A guerrilla battalion, airlifted from Long Tieng, has re-occupied the positions on Phou Long Mat ridge lost on 4 June.

In southern Laos, enemy units fired rockets at PS-38, the guerrilla base west of Attapeu, but did no damage. Laotian Army patrols encountered small enemy units around Saravane, but no major clashes developed.

Recent intercepts between Pathet Lao elements operating near Saravane provide some insight into Communist tactical planning in this area. According to these messages, an attack on the nearby guerrilla base at Ban Nong Boua will be mounted on 8 June. An assault on Saravane is to follow on 25 June. Intercepted Pathet Lao reports on future military operations have proved to be inaccurate in the past with respect to timing. It seems plausible, however, that the Communists would want to eliminate any sources of opposition in the Saravane area before seizing the provincial capital.

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SOUTH VIETNAM

The early June upsurge of the Communists' "spring" campaign so far has consisted largely of shelling military and urban targets in South Vietnam's I, II, and IV corps. This phase of enemy action may last several more days.

Enemy forces marked the opening days of April and May with similar efforts, but with each series the scope and intensity has been decreasing. This may be due not only to increased enemy difficulties, but also to allied pre-emptive measures

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USSR

Deputy Foreign Minister Firyubin, who is responsible for South and Southeast Asia, is coming to New York on Sunday as a "guest" of Ambassador to the UN Malik. No reason has been given for his trip.

If the visit has political significance, Firyubin's task probably is related to the situation in Indochina, where the Soviet position has deteriorated badly in recent weeks while China has made corresponding gains. The spread of the war into Cambodia has pushed North Vietnam toward Chinese positions and delivered Sihanouk into Peking's hands. In these circumstances, Moscow's best chance of getting back into the act is via the diplomatic route.

If this is Firyubin's mission, several possibilities occur to us:

--He might be charged with taking soundings on the possibility of international action to restore Cambodian "neutrality" after 30 June. This would be intended to force ARVN to depart Cambodia with the US forces and to restore the operating conditions which the Vietnamese Communists enjoyed until last month. Firyubin might try to stimulate and build on the efforts of others, such as U Thant, to organize international efforts in this direction.

--He might have a private message for the US to the effect that the present is a propitious time for Washington to make a new diplomatic gesture, such as the dispatch of a high-level negotiator to Paris. Recent Soviet statements to third countries, alleging that great strains have been placed on North Vietnamese resources by the Cambodian action, could have been intended to prepare the ground for this pitch, which would be accompanied by warnings that, unless the deadlock were broken, Chinese influence in Indochina would continue to grow.

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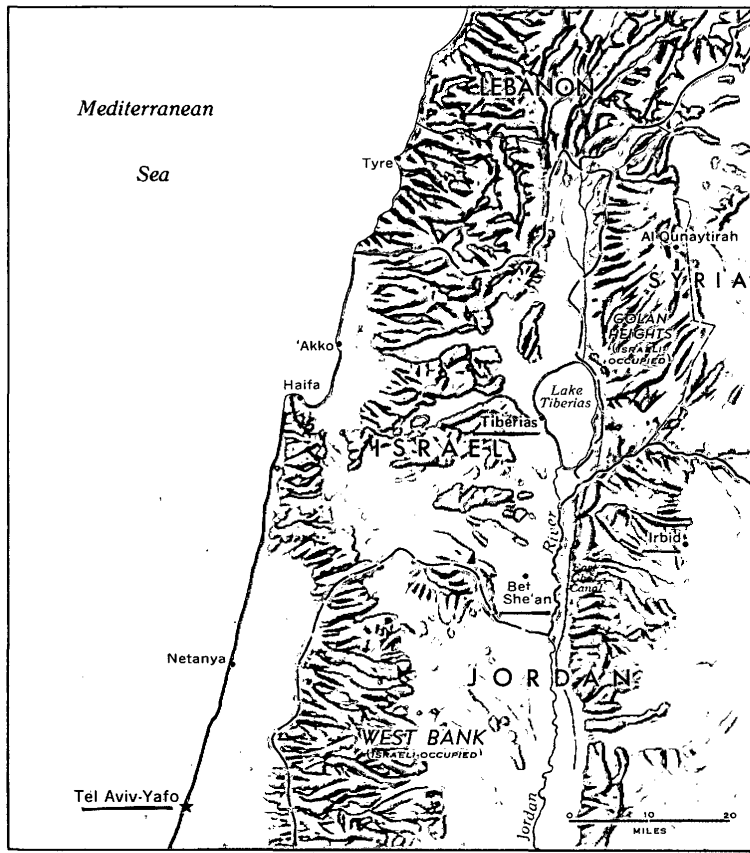
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--His instructions might go no further than to put in an appearance, remind UN diplomats of the USSR's 1969 proposal on Asian collective security, and generally manifest continuing Soviet interest and involvement in the area.

Projects of the first two sorts would face formidable obstacles. Neither Hanoi nor Peking (nor Moscow, for that matter) has ever accepted any UN competence in Indo-chinese questions. North Vietnam's propensity to negotiate is currently at a nadir. Nor can the Soviets have much hope that the US is ready to lower its terms at the present moment.

Despite these odds, Firiyubin's trip suggests that Moscow is casting about for some way to reinject itself into the game. In the face of its recent setbacks, Moscow may have decided to take a more independent line rather than clearing everything with Hanoi. The trouble is that, if Moscow is readier to play its own hand, this is only because it has hardly any leverage left over Hanoi.

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ISRAEL-JORDAN

A series of incidents on the Israeli-Jordanian border has raised tempers in both Israel and Jordan and could spiral even further into more serious military clashes. Israel has lost a half dozen dead in Bet Shean Valley in the last few days through fedayeen and Jordanian Army shellings. Tel Aviv says it will take stronger action including "even crossing the border" if Husayn is not able to bring the fedayeen and Jordanian and Iraqi forces under control.

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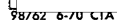
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Fedayeen firing on Israeli settlements in the Bet Shean Valley has been a continuing problem for both Tel Aviv and Amman. The latter has tried hard--and with some success--to curb fedayeen action there, but lately the fedayeen have gotten out of hand. The Israelis retaliated with the indiscriminate shelling of the town of Irbid, and Jordanian forces countered by lobbing shells into Israeli Tiberias. Some Israelis are convinced that if they are to control the situation, they will have to move across the valley and clean out the high ground.

Israeli patrols have been sweeping into desolate southern Jordan from time to time, and of course most recently into southern Lebanon, with relative impunity. A move into northern Jordan could be the catalyst for far more trouble.

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PANAMA

In a talk with Ambassador Sayre yesterday, President Lakas reaffirmed his government's willingness to allow the US to use Rio Hato, a major air base and training area outside the Canal Zone, after the existing agreement expires in August. Lakas made it clear, however, that he expects the US to reciprocate by granting a number of Panamanian requests.

Top Panamanian officials have recently tried to persuade the US to return certain areas within the Canal Zone, such as military airfields and the docks at Colon and Balboa. Earlier this week, the Panamanian chargé in Washington stressed his government's interest in gaining an increased sugar quota, an annual rent for Rio Hato, and the return of a disused airfield, Old France Field.

The government has not yet settled on a specific quid pro quo for Rio Hato and may even, in advance of any concessions by the US, extend the agreement for one year. Nevertheless, the government's revenue problems and its wish to increase its popular support by demonstrating its ability to deal effectively with the US make it likely that Panamanian demands eventually will become insistent.



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NOTES

USSR: Two new groups of ten SS-11 silos each have been identified in the latest satellite photograph of the Derazhnya MRBM complex. Construction of the new groups probably began about the first of this year. A total of 12 SS-11 groups has now been identified at Derazhnya and at the Pervomaysk IRBM complex. Five of these groups are operational; construction is continuing at the remaining seven and they should be completed by early next year.

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Paris Talks: Madame Binh, the Viet Cong's "foreign minister," has announced that she is returning to Vietnam. Her departure will leave no high-level delegate in either of the Vietnamese Communist delegations. The Communists have been careful not to scuttle the Paris talks completely, but they clearly see no immediate prospects for meaningful negotiations in this forum.

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